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ABSTRACT

A total of 148 Finnish adolescents were interviewed about their hopes for the future. The content, extension, internality, and actualization levels of each hope were estimated from the adolescents' answers. Scores measuring the level of future planning and internality were calculated from questionnaires filled out by 138 of the mothers. Results indicated that adolescents' hopes mainly concerned their future occupation, education, and family. Moreover, the older the youth were, the more aims they had concerning those main concerns. Thus, adolescents' thinking about the future realistically reflected the structure of developmental events in their life span. Mothers' greater involvement in planning their own lives was significantly related to adolescents' higher realization level of educational aims. Furthermore, mothers' higher scores on internality were significantly related to children's higher scores on internality concerning the actualization of their educational aims. Author/RH)

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# ADOLESCENTS' FUTURE ORIENTATION, LIFE SPAN, AND SOCIALIZATION IN THE FAMILY CONTEXT

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Abstract

148 Finnish adolescents were interviewed about their hopes for the future. The content, extension, internality, and actualization level of each hope were estimated from the answers. Scores measuring the level of future planning and internality were calculated from questionnaires filled out by the mothers. The results showed that adolescents' hopes mainly concerned their future occupation, education, and family. Moreover, the older they were, the more aims they had concerning these contents. Thus, adolescents' thinking about the future realistically reflects the structure of developmental events in their life span. The greater the mothers' involvement in planning the lives of their own, the higher the realization level of educational aims expressed by the children. In addition, the higher the mothers' scores on internality, the higher the children's scores on internality concerning the actualization of their educational aims.

# PROBLEMS

HOW DOES ANTICIPATED LIFE SPAN INFLUENCE

(1) WHAT ADOLESCENTS THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE AND

(2) HOW FAR INTO THE FUTURE THEIR AIMS EXTEND?

DO MOTHERS' LEVELS OF LIFE PLANNING AND INTERNALITY INFLUENCE LEVELS OF KNOWLEDGE, REALIZATION, AND INTERNALITY CONCERNING ADOLESCENTS' HOPES FOR THE FUTURE?

# SUBJECTS

148 FINNISH ADOLESCENTS INCLUDING GIRLS AND BOYS OF 11, 15, AND 18 YEARS OF AGE.

138 MOTHERS (93%) OF THESE ADOLESCENTS WHO RETURNED THE QUESTIONNAIRE MAILED TO THEM.

# PROCEDURE

FIRSTLY, ADOLESCENTS WERE INTERVIEWED INDIVIDUALLY ABOUT THEIR FUTURE HOPES AND PLANS.

SECONDLY, THE MOTHERS FILLED OUT A QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING THEIR INTERNALITY AND INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING THEIR OWN LIVES.

# ADOLESCENTS' INTERVIEW

THE ADOLESCENTS WERE INTERVIEWED ABOUT THEIR FUTURE HOPES AND PLANS. WHEN A SPECIFIC HOPE OR PLAN WAS MENTIONED, THE INTERVIEWEE WAS ASKED:

- WHEN HE/ SHE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE ACTUALIZED (**EXTENSION**)
- TO WHAT EXTENT HE/SHE HAD CARRIED OUT THE PLANS TO REALIZE IT (**REALIZATION**)
- HOW MUCH **KNOWLEDGE** HE/SHE HAD ABOUT IT
- TO INDICATE ON A 4-POINT BIPOLAR RATING SCALE THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE OCCURENCE OF EACH HOPE AND PLAN DEPENDED ON **EXTERNAL** OR **INTERNAL** FACTORS

THE CONTENT OF THE HOPES AND PLANS AND AMOUNT OF REALIZATION AND KNOWLEDGE WERE ESTIMATED FROM INTERVIEW DATA BY TWO ASSESSORS USING CONTENT ANALYSES OF THE ANSWERS.

INTERATER RELIABILITY OF THESE ANALYSES WAS .94 FOR CONTENT OF HOPES, .91 FOR REALIZATION, AND .88 FOR KNOWLEDGE.

# MOTHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

THE MOTHERS FILLED OUT A QUESTIONNAIRE CONSISTING OF FOLLOWING SCALES:

THE **LIFE PLANNING SCALE** CONSISTED OF 12 ITEMS USED TO ASSESS THE LEVEL TO WHICH PEOPLE HAD PLANNED THEIR PRESENT AND FUTURE LIFE. THE PARTICIPANTS' USED A 4-POINT RATING SCALE TO EXPRESS THEIR LEVEL OF AGREEMENT OR DISAGREEMENT ABOUT EACH ITEM.

**INTERNALITY WITH REGARD TO PERSONAL LIFE** WAS MEASURED USING THE SUM TOTAL OF SCORES FOR THE TWO ITEMS ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF INTERNALITY CONCERNING EVENTS RELATED TO THEIR OWN LIFE.

**INTERNALITY WITH REGARD TO THE WORLD** WAS MEASURED USING THE SUM TOTAL OF THREE ITEMS USED TO ASSESS THE LEVEL OF INTERNALITY CONCERNING EVENTS RELATED TO NATIONAL AND GLOBAL AFFAIRS.

# RESULTS

THE ADOLESCENTS' HOPES AND PLANS MAINLY CONCERNED CHOOSING A PROFESSION/ OCCUPATION (60%), EDUCATION (48%), HAVING A FAMILY (20%), AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES (23%).

MOREOVER, THE NUMBER OF HOPES RELATING TO FUTURE OCCUPATION, EDUCATION, AND FAMILY INCREASED WITH AGE. THIS INDICATES THAT, AS YOUNG PEOPLE GET OLDER, THE DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS RELATING TO THESE CONTENTS ARE ACTUALIZED.

ADOLESCENTS ANTICIPATED THAT THEIR AIMS CONCERNING EDUCATION WOULD BE ACTUALIZED, ON AVERAGE, AT THE AGE OF 18.4, CONCERNING LEISURE ACTIVITIES AT THE AGE OF 18.6, CONCERNING OCCUPATION AT THE AGE OF 21.5, AND CONCERNING FUTURE FAMILY AT THE AGE OF 24.3. IN ALL AGE GROUPS, HOPES, ESPECIALLY THOSE CONCERNING FUTURE OCCUPATION AND FAMILY, ARE EXPECTED TO BE REALIZED AT THE SAME AGE OF THE ANTICIPATED LIFE SPAN (FIGURE 1).

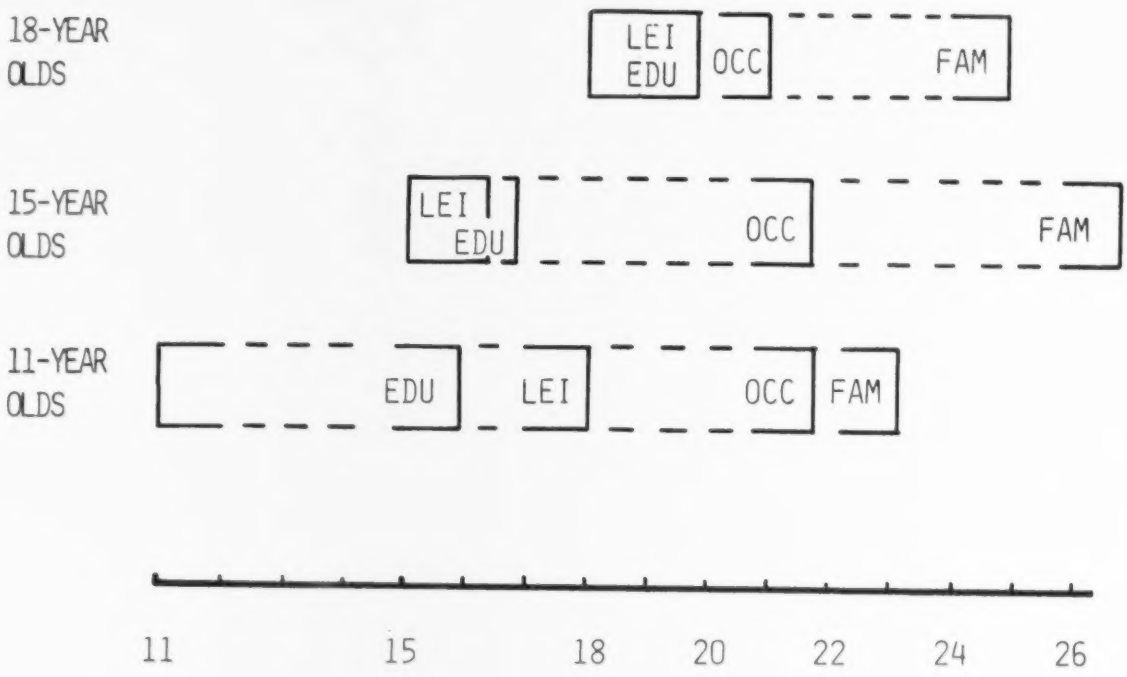
THE RESULTS IMPLY THAT ADOLESCENTS' THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE REALISTICALLY REFLECTS THE STRUCTURE OF DEVELOPMENTAL EVENTS IN THEIR LIFE SPAN.

THE GREATER THE MOTHERS' INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING THEIR OWN LIVES, THE HIGHER THE REALIZATION LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL HOPES EXPRESSED BY THE CHILDREN. (SEE TABLE 1) IN ADDITION, THE HIGHER THE MOTHERS' SCORES ON INTERNALITY CONCERNING THEIR PERSONAL LIFE, THE HIGHER THE CHILDREN'S SCORES ON INTERNALITY CONCERNING THE ACTUALIZATION OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL HOPES AND PLANS.

# CONCLUSIONS

ADOLESCENTS' THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE REALISTICALLY REFLECTS THE STRUCTURE OF DEVELOPMENTAL EVENTS IN THEIR LIFE SPAN.

BOTH FUTURE PLANNING AND ATTRIBUTIONAL STYLES ARE LEARNED IN A FAMILY ENVIRONMENT.




EXTENSION OF HOPES

BY AGE

LEI = Hopes Concerning Leisure Activities

EDU = Hopes Concerning Future Education

OCC = Hopes Concerning Future Occupation

FAM = Hopes Concerning Future Family

FIG. 1. MEAN EXTENSION SCORES FOR HOPES OF DIFFERENT CONTENT MEASURED BY AGE IN THREE DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS.

TAB. 1. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE SCORES MEASURING ADOLESCENTS' AND THEIR MOTHERS' LIFE PLANNING AND INTERNALITY

| MOTHERS' | ADOLESCENTS' HOPES FOR EDUCATION | | | ADOLESCENTS' HOPES FOR OCCUPATION | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | KNOWL-EDGE | REALIZ-ATION | INTER-NALITY | KNOWL-EDGE | REALIZ-ATION | INTER-NALITY |
| PLANNING | .21 | .38** | | .10 | .00 | |
| INTERNALITY/ OWN LIFE | | | .44** | | | .08 |
| INTERNALITY/ THE WORLD | | | -.02 | | | -.01 |

Note. ** = $p < .01$